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VALLEY STAR

THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE

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IT'S YOUR PAPER

MTA Ponders Fare Increase

BY KHARA HUBERMAN
 COPY EDITOR

In order to fight rising fuel costs and a daunting \$1.8 billion deficit, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority has proposed a two-tier plan that would increase fares and ultimately balance the system's budget.

The two-step plan would potentially up the cost of daily, weekly and monthly passes in July and again in January 2009 causing passenger tolls to soar by 100 percent, or more.

"Before we go raise bus fares, we're going to scrub things very, very intently to make sure that's what you have to do," said MTA Boardmember Richard Katz at a community meeting in April.

CEO Roger Snoble said the agency simply can't pay rising fuel costs and eliminate a looming \$1.8 billion deficit by fare increases alone.

Since 1996 the agency was under a federal consent decree that stipulated the first seven years of the agreement, fares would not increase and 1.4 million hours of bus service would be added. Five months ago, a U.S. District Court judge lifted the decree.

During the past five years the MTA has down-sized more than 500 administrative and managerial positions and added TV's on its vehicles that play commercials, netting about \$100,000 annually.

In addition to escalating fares, the transit company plans to save at least \$10 million by trimming service hours and streamlining more than three-dozen routes in

see 'MTA' page 4

BEYOND OUR BORDERS



PAUL OLDEN/ VALLEY STAR

FLAG SALUTE- Immigration reform supporters lift a large American flag during their march to City Hall in downtown Los Angeles May 1, known as "May Day." Police estimated the crowd totaled approximately 25,000, which is a significant drop-off from the estimated 500,000 marchers at the 2006 rally. This was the first of two rallies in L.A. and one of many staged around the country. It's estimated that 12 million illegal immigrants live and work in the United States. Congress failed to pass immigration reform in its last session struggling to reconcile divergent opinions on the issue.

Valley's Review in Good Standing

BY JESSICA SHAFFER
 OPINION EDITOR

Every college has a duty to periodically check that they are effectively serving their students. A visiting accreditation team carefully examined Valley College March 19-22 to make sure it did just that.

Though the team will not release the actual report until June, their comments made in the exit session indicated that they were impressed with the school.

"[The team] felt we had a very positive, welcoming atmosphere for students and

that the college faculty, staff and administrators worked well together to enhance the student learning experience," said Valley President Tyree Wieder.

Without their accreditation, community colleges cannot offer associate degrees or transferable classes, and their students would be unable to receive financial aid.

The team can revoke a college's status as an accredited institution if problems persist. Compton Community College's accreditation was recently withdrawn and it was placed

under the supervision of El Camino College.

The 11-member panel reviewed Valley's status as an accredited campus and spoke with students, but their main purpose for visiting was to verify the findings of the college's self-study.

In preparation for the accreditation evaluation, Valley began a self-study of the campus in 2005 that faculty, staff members and students had all taken part in to identify problems with the campus and discuss possible solutions.

During the visit, there were two open forums in which the accreditation team talked with the campus community followed by an exit session. In that session the committee gave the school both their recommendations for improvements and commendations.

"They always give a few recommendations and they always give some commendations... and a couple of things they mentioned were things that we already set for ourselves or goals that we intend to work on," said Faculty Accreditation Chair Deborah Kaye. "We weren't surprised by the things they mentioned because we already know that we're working on these things."

Some problems

that the team, lead by Dr. Helen Benjamin, chancellor of Contra Costa Community College District addressed were Valley's \$1.9 million budget deficit and getting more people involved in decision making about the campus.

The team commended the college on the work done by the Associated Student Union. While they were on campus, the team happened to attend the ASU International Fine Arts Festival and were impressed with the group's work.

"We were mentioned twice specifically in the accreditation committees," said ASU Vice President Jonathan Oskins. "They really liked the international fine arts day, which was held while they, the accreditation committee, were on campus, so that made us stand out really [well]... It feels good to be given a commendation for the work that we're always doing."

SECURITY PLANS IN MOTION

BY JESSICA SHAFFER
 OPINION EDITOR

The recent tragedy at Virginia Tech University raises some important questions about the security of Valley College, but the school is already working to prepare for similar situations.

Valley is planning on starting to upgrade security in about six months by adding lights, security cameras, call boxes and electronic door locks on campus buildings. It is statistically a very safe campus, with only six attempted violent crimes in 2006 and only one reported incident of battery this year.

"Even though Virginia Tech happened and you always want to say we're becoming more alert, I think we've actually been as alert as we could be to begin with," said Vice President of Administrative Services Tom Jacobsmeier. "We're already doing all of the things that we're capable of doing in the event of a Virginia Tech [occurrence]."

The school has constant security on campus and they also have security plans in effect in the event of a shooter on campus like what happened at Virginia Tech.

"We have a contingency for everything," said Deputy Sheriff Tom Lynch. "We train constantly for as many scenarios as we can come up [with]. All [Virginia Tech] does is reinforce the reasons why we train these guys."

Staff and faculty on campus are trained to respond to emergencies and are known as "safety marshals." The campus also has a phone warning system and plans on installing a loud speaker warning system.

The fact remains that the unpredictability of major crises events like school shootings make them difficult to prevent.

"Even if you had a whole Marines [squadron]... in this school when something like that is going to happen, it's going to happen because nobody's going to advise you," said psychology major Aracellys Tijerino. "Even though you have so many people taking care of students, when something is going to happen, it's going to happen."

The installation of security cameras to the campus would potentially aid in a crisis situation as they will be linked directly to the Sheriff's Department's patrol cars.

"I think that [the cameras] are going to be a huge deterrent to a lot of property

see 'Security' page 4

VALLEY PEOPLE

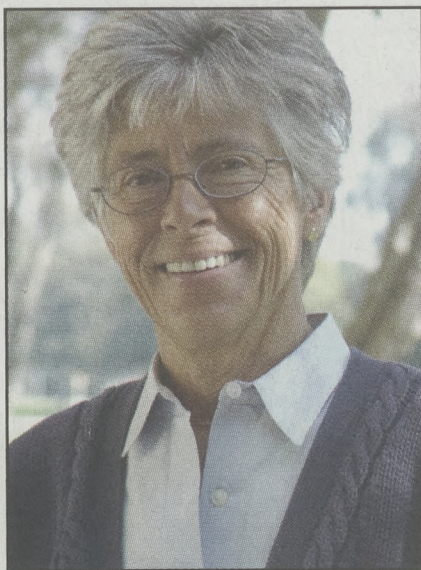
Tronto Swings into Retirement

BY KRISTEN BECKER
 VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

With two offices - one official and the other a bench outside the Administration Building - Valley College's Vice President of Academic Affairs Carlie Tronto can be seen outside most days enjoying a Marlboro Light, the sunshine and the conversation of fellow smokers and passersby - be they student, faculty or staff.

This will be the administrator's last semester chatting students up about classes and places they have visited as she plans to retire in June. These conversations have given her the opportunity to do what she loved so much when she was a teacher - talk to students.

"Because I'm not in the classroom anymore, my interactions with students often times aren't



VALERIA PODOYNTSYNA / VALLEY STAR
 Carlie Tronto, Valley College's vice president of Academic Affairs.

positive because of the position I'm in - [dealing] with problems with an instructor, whatever. So in that case, I just get to be out there and chat with them."

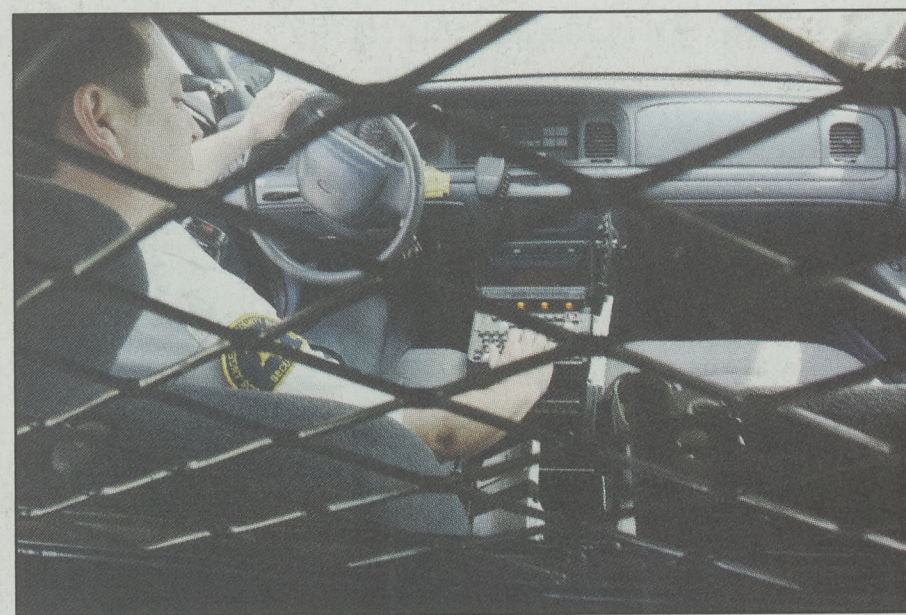
This other office is eas-

ily identified around campus. Sheri Berger, a math instructor at Valley knows it well. "She has her porch office, her outdoors office," Berger said. "And she always does get a kick out of talking with students and hearing what they have to say, and because she's out there all the time, she has that opportunity."

A petite woman with short grey hair, Tronto has created an amalgam of work and play in her office. Stacks of books, binders and files signal that she's got her hands full at work, while her collection of cat figurines and her second-place trophy from last year's Patrons Association Golf Classic allow a peek into what keeps her relaxed in her spare time.

Tronto's plans for retirement consist of "play[ing] a lot of

see 'Tronto' page 4



PAUL OLDEN / VALLEY STAR

WATCHFUL EYE - Sheriff's Department Security Officer Robert Figueroa checks his computer during his daily shift at Valley College.

Valley Professors' Efforts Recognized

BY DIANA QUEZADA
STAFF WRITER

The inaugural 2007 Apple Awards come to Valley College today, and recognize professors' outstanding performance and the difference they make in students' lives.

Presented by the honors society Tau Alpha Epsilon and the ASU, the idea was brought to Valley at the beginning of the semester by Vice President of Student Services Yasmin Delahoussaye, who was a counselor at Pierce College, saw that school implement the awards.

"The concept of the Apple Awards is to honor our college's teaching and counseling faculty who, day-in and day-

out give their all to the students of LAVC," said Delahoussaye. "There are so many instructors and counselors who, I personally know, go above and beyond for their students. I think it's time to let them know how much we appreciate them."

Students and non-instructor staff were allowed to vote for as many professors as they wanted, but could only vote once for each teacher.

"The members of TAE wanted to recognize the contributions that professors make to the individual students," said Annie Maguire, TAE president. "The members...feel very strongly that each and every professor who has made a difference in a student's life should be honored."

A total of 33 students nominated 48 professors. The top three winners are Tara Lake, who teaches African-American studies, and Biology instructors Becky Green-

Marroquin and Pamela Byrd-Williams.

Green-Marroquin and Lake tied for first with nine votes each and Byrd-Williams was right behind with eight votes.

"When I found out, I was really honored and very touched," said Byrd-Williams, who came to Valley in Fall 2001. "I think that it is very sweet that my students or former students felt enough to nominate and vote for me. It makes me feel as if I have been doing my job right."

Each nominated professor will receive a certificate and be presented with a plaque honoring their excellence.

"I still have the Apple Awards given to me by the [Pierce] students," said Delahoussaye. "They are, and will remain, some of my most treasured possessions."

Students and professors are invited to attend the awards ceremony held today from 2-3 p.m. in the Fireside Room in the Campus Center.

CLARIFICATION: The Valley College Forensics Speech and Debate Team came in seventh place overall and second place in individual sweepstakes, tying with Moorpark, at the 2007 Phi Rho Pi national forensics tournament in Houston, Texas.

CAMPUS CRIME

Crime in Little Time

BY KHARA HUBERMAN
COPY EDITOR

Attempted Grand Theft Auto

When coming back from his office last Thursday, a student noticed his locked four-door vehicle's driver side door key hole had been punched out.

When entering his 2001 green GMC Yukon he also noticed his gray steering column had been broken and colored wires were exposed. The incident happened April 12 between 12:10 p.m. and 2:35 p.m. The estimated damage is worth \$700. There were no witnesses and no suspects were apprehended.

Probation Violation

An expelled North Hollywood High School student was found with two other gang members on the north side of Hatteras street in parking lot E. He was cited for truancy and was released to his mother after being detained at gun point for suspiciously looking into a yellow Volkswagen Beetle April 10 at 1 p.m. His probation conditions include not associating with gang members and not participating in any

gang activity. Being with two known gang members and acting suspiciously was the cause of his probation violation. No further information is available at the moment.

Student Incident

A disoriented female entered the sheriff's station Tuesday, April 12 asking for assistance. At approximately 1:15 p.m. the station's secretary took the female into a back room where she requested jail time. The pupil was told she had not committed any wrongful acts and would not be placed in jail. The student was released, then escorted back to the station after it came to light that she was a minor. No further information has been reported.

Lost Property

A student reported a lost parking pass Monday, April 23 at approximately 3:30 p.m. The property had been missing since April 19. No updated information is available at this time.

The Valley College Sheriff's Department asks that anyone with information regarding any of these incidents please call the department at (818) 947-2911.

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ROD LYONS

TheValleyStar@yahoo.com
www.LAValleyStar.com
(818) 947-2576

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OPINION

3

AN OPINION

Media Exhibits Restraint

By JOSHUA SPENCE
STAFF WRITER

The TV news cycle has moved past the Virginia Tech University Massacre and the subsequent footage of mass killer's Seung-Hui Cho's last words for such breaking news stories as Rosie O'Donnell leaving "The View" and Anna Nicole Smith's daughter adjusting to life outside the Bahamas. This is finally some good news in the world of media sensationalism.

The ever-evolving structure that is today's news world necessitates 24-hour instant access for all its mediums- like radio, television, newspaper- with hundreds of angles being produced for a single story. It's one thing to cover the death of a former Playboy Playmate turned walking punchline, but it's another thing to cover the brother's-uncle's-sister's-nephew's-roommate's-friend of a friend's perspective who once saw that former Playboy Playmate.

The stories revolving around VTU are old news to the American public, and that's a good thing, but NBC's decision to release the footage of Cho's last words highlights the catch-22 between journalistic integrity and human sensitivity.

NBC Nightly News anchor Brian Williams said, "We are sensitive to how this will be seen by those affected and we know we are in effect airing the words of a murderer here tonight...so much of it is so profane, so downright gross and incomprehensible. We tried to edit carefully for broadcast tonight."

Cho mailed a large multimedia package to NBC News in New York containing messages about his anger at the wealthy and foreshadowing the imminent rampage.

The package contained a DVD showing video clips of Cho speaking in addition to more than two dozen photos including

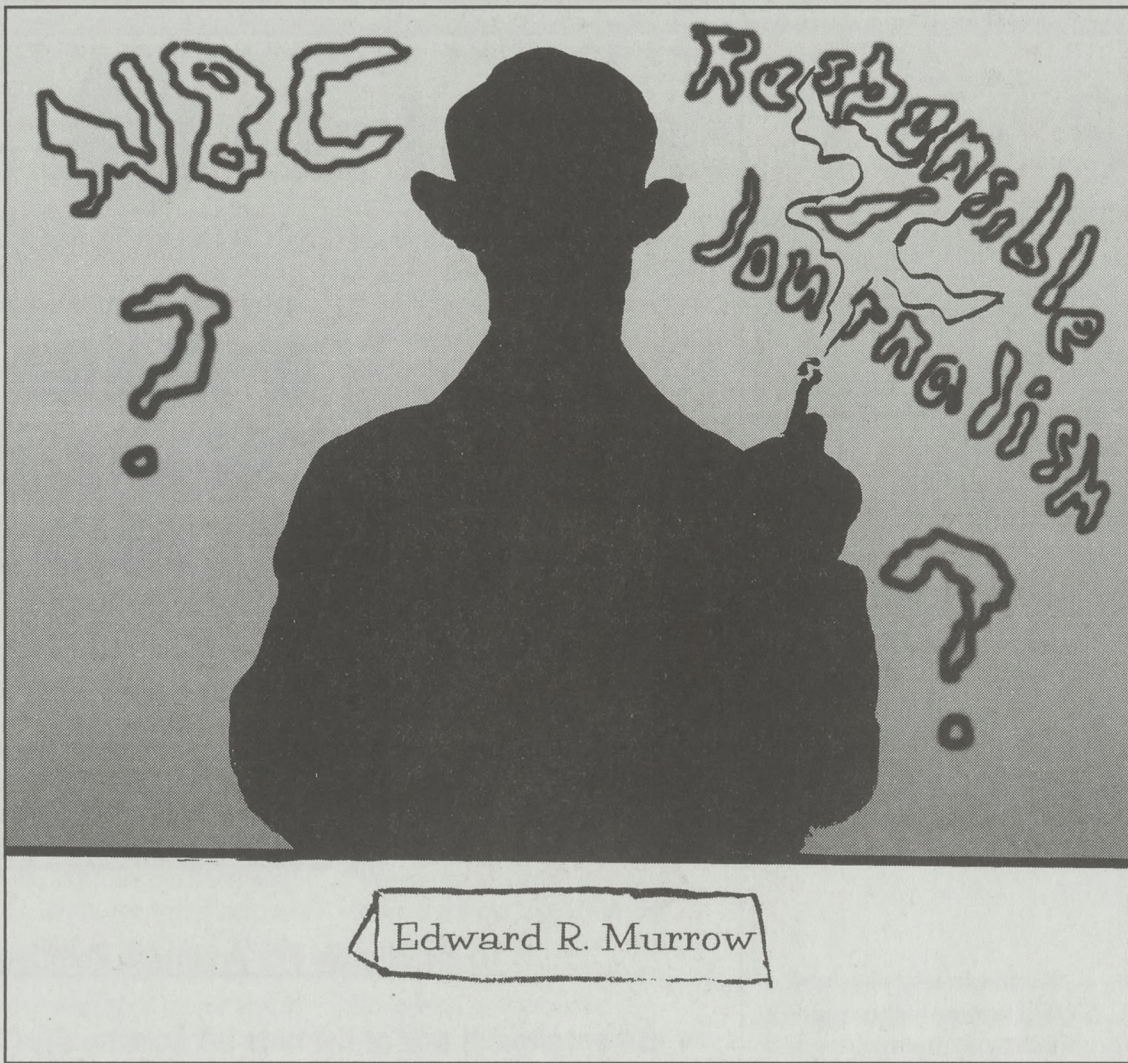


ILLUSTRATION BY RICARDO BARRERA / VALLEY STAR

many of him posing with knives and guns. NBC immediately reported the package to the FBI, but not before they made copies of the contents inside. NBC then decided to broadcast carefully edited pieces, amounting to less than two minutes, on the evening news and its cable programs.

Virginia Tech students, especially those personally affected by the shooting, would've preferred that NBC not show the video at all, citing that doing so would give Cho an undesired 15 minutes of fame.

While that seems correct in theory, from an ethical standpoint, NBC News had the right to air the cryptic video sent by Cho. NBC has an obligation to present not only breaking news, but the reason behind the breaking news.

NBC News should get credit for editing the video to the point where only the essential facts of who Cho was and why he committed this heinous crime were seen. Anything else would be excessive and would give in to Cho's wishes by making him famous for such an abomi-

nable act.

NBC's coverage also demonstrates how these situations should be handled in the future. By covering the incident and not harping on the issue in the days and weeks that follow, NBC and most media outlets have employed good taste. Since the story is now buried, Cho will not have achieved a cult status that would be comparable to Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold from the Columbine High School Massacre.

More importantly, Virginia Tech will be able to recover from this tragic event faster because the media won't be asking students and faculty to relive those horrific moments every five minutes in order to generate a new angle.

Many miniscule stories are expanded to the point of being beyond parody. Exercising restraint is something the media aren't commonly known for. However, the media generally like to keep a story way past its expiration date; it's refreshing to see this one story exit just at the right time.

AN OPINION

Hidden Dangers of Antiperspirants

By DIANA QUEZADA
STAFF WRITER

Perspiring is hardly attractive and to most it is not optional. Therefore many turn to antiperspirants to stay dry. However, antiperspirants contain a toxic aluminum-based compound to prevent sweating that poses serious risks including Alzheimer's disease and breast cancer.

Sweat-stain-free clothing is not more important than our health or worth putting toxic chemicals in our bodies.

On WebMd.com, Dr. Eric Hanson of the University of North Carolina's Department of Dermatology explains antiperspirants work because aluminum ions are taken into the cells that line the ducts at the top layer of the skin. When the aluminum ions are drawn into the cells, water passes in with them. The cells begin to swell, squeezing the ducts closed so that "sweat can't get out."

Aluminum causing the plugging of glands is both unnatural and unsafe. Toxins must be released from the body, but if the glands are blocked, this can only mean that the toxins are being deposited elsewhere and possibly causing harm.

Aluminum has also been connected to Alzheimer's disease. WebMd.com states, "aluminum does turn up in higher amounts than normal in some autopsy studies of Alzheimer's patients." It's amazing what risks people will take in order to avoid a wet spot on their shirt.

There is also widespread controversy about aluminum being linked to breast cancer. It is a fact that women are urged not to use antiperspirants several days before a mammogram because the aluminum appears on the X-ray.

Furthermore, preservatives commonly used in antiperspirants and other cosmetic products have been found in breast tumors. One would think that people would have more sense and throw away

their antiperspirants and refrain from ever using them again, but people willingly sacrifice their health and continue to apply these harmful products just to be able to say that they don't perspire.

Cancer researcher Philippa Darbre, of the University of Reading in England says the evidence is rising that the aluminum ingredient in antiperspirants can mimic estrogen in the body and that estrogen is a risk factor for breast cancer.

There are many alternatives available without aluminum. In order to prevent body odor, harmful chemicals don't need to be added to our bodies that may cause a number of problems in the future.

As technology advances, deodorant companies are developing antiperspirants without aluminum. Adidas created the "Aluminum-free Cotton Tech" that acts as a deodorant and antiperspirant. It is 100 percent aluminum-free and its patented Cotton Tech "absorbs and evaporates wetness naturally."

It's common for people to say that deodorant alone doesn't work, but this is because our bodies are accustomed to the constant level of aluminum. If we never used antiperspirants, our bodies wouldn't be dependent on them to keep us dry.

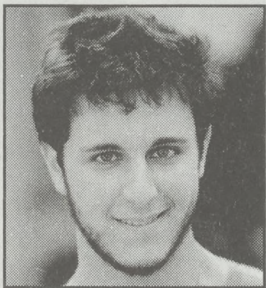
This goes hand in hand with coffee drinkers who consume the beverage every morning for months or even years. The day they stop drinking coffee they are likely to get a headache because that same level of caffeine isn't in their system. But if they stop drinking coffee altogether, they will go through a withdrawal period until the caffeine is out of their system completely, then the body will adjust.

The human body is constantly warding off diseases, and when we add toxins, we are only making our bodies work harder. Increasing health problems to avoid perspiring is not worth it.

Campus View

PHOTOS BY PAUL OLDEN
TEXT BY JESSICA SHAFFER

How do you feel about NBC releasing edited footage of the tape sent by the Virginia Tech Shooter?



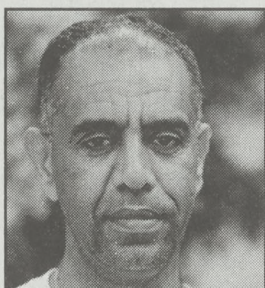
"[I'm] very against it because I feel like it empowers anyone who is borderline psychotic because it makes [the shooter] into a hero."

-David Sauer
Pre-Medicine



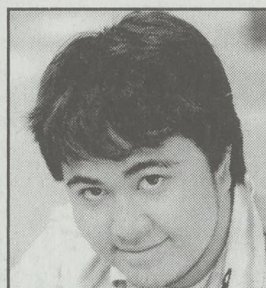
"I'm OK with that because I think that people need to know what happened with this guy... they need to know why he did this."

-Mayna Martirosyan
Journalism



"They shouldn't have released the video clip because all it's going to do is create copycats. They should have kept it confidential."

-Soloman Siraj
Science



"I guess it's a good thing that they did it because... at least they let the whole world see the message... He taped it for the people to see it."

-John Patangan
Respiratory Therapy

LETTERS

Send letters to the editor to thevalleystar@yahoo.com -- Letters must be signed, should be no longer than 300 words, include a subject line of "Letters to the Editor" and are subject to editing.

Mental Health Issues are a Matter of Campus Safety

On April 18, Valley College President Tyree Wieder invited those interested to gather in Monarch Square to pay respects to the victims at Virginia Tech. I think the campus community needs to know what preparations are in place to identify cases of mental illness on this campus in order to prevent an incident similar to the tragedy at Virginia

Tech. As far as I know, confidentiality laws would prevent mental health professionals from sharing information regarding mentally disturbed persons. If this is true, how can the administration take steps to prevent a tragedy at Valley College?

John Maddox
History Professor

AN OPINION

Nepotism Tarnishes Wolfowitz's World Bank Tenure

By ANDY FEHER
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

"You're hired."

No, those aren't the words of Donald Trump. That's the response the State Department gave World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz's girlfriend, Shaha Riza, in September 2005 because of Wolfowitz's Washington connections.

When Wolfowitz joined the World Bank in June 2005, concerns over a conflict of interest required Riza to leave her World Bank post. The World Bank's ethics committee then asked Wolfowitz to arrange her departure, including a one-step promotion and one-time raise. Wolfowitz set up a State Department job that increased Riza's salary from \$132,660 to \$193,590, and it will con-

tinue to grow annually.

When Wolfowitz's five-year term at the World Bank ends, Riza will make \$244,960 a year thanks to Wolfowitz's brokering. That means, Washington Post's Eugene Robinson explains, she'll make "considerably more than the salary of her nominal boss, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice — and Rice has to pay income taxes."

For this lapse in judgment among his other questionable decisions, Wolfowitz should resign.

He not only tarnished the Bank's reputation, but also undermined his anti-corruption efforts, which he championed upon assuming his post. As long as Wolfowitz decides which countries receive loans, his reasoning will henceforth be in question, causing staffers and recipients to scrutinize his

allocations.

Inconsistent selectivity got him in trouble in the first place when he withheld loans from Uzbekistan. Many believe the cut-off was politically motivated since in July 2005, Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov denied the Bush administration the right to use a military base there.

There are dozens of rapacious regimes deserving of condemnation. If only Wolfowitz denied funds to all, then controversy may have been averted, yet he continues flooding Pakistan, an ally in the "War on Terror," with World Bank largesse.

Wolfowitz believes his opponents are carrying out their grudges from his previous job as Deputy Secretary of Defense, which led many to call him the architect of the Iraq War. In

response he said, "I'm not in my previous job."

While Wolfowitz tries to pirouette away from his vampiric critics by defending his past decisions, he's simply wrong that they are holding grudges. Critics must hold his previous job against him; the same utopian ideals he advocated in Iraq — spreading democracy throughout the Middle East — followed him to the World Bank where he aimed to end poor governance in Africa.

As a foreign policy fantasist and now a World Bank idealist, Wolfowitz always shoots for the stars, except he actually thinks he can reach them. His dogmatic idealism prevents awareness of what's actually achievable.

In the past, the World Bank supplied loans to Zaire to ensure his sup-

port during the Cold War, knowing that President Mobutu Sese Seko pocketed the money.

Wolfowitz's current blunder isn't as egregious as the aforementioned example, where no one was held accountable.

Nor is it as bad as former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, whose son "profited [while] presiding over a \$50-billion Oil-for-Food scandal that led to frequent death in Iraq and profit among global elites," according to Hoover Institution historian Victor David Hanson.

Riza's qualifications, such as her education at the London School of Economics and Oxford University, may have justified a raise. Unfortunately, she procured the job through nepotism, which seriously undercuts the World Bank and Wolfowitz's last shred of credibility.

'Tronto'

continued from page 1

golf." She picked up a miniature golf cart sitting on the table behind a bowl full of candy to emphasize her point.

According to Berger, this is "her signal."

"She said she was going to pull it out when she was ready to retire."

Tronto joked that she enjoys the game because "I'm getting too old to run around chasing the ball, so this way, I decided the ball sits still and I get to hit it."

Valley first welcomed Tronto in 1996 as Dean of Academic Affairs. She became acting vice president of Academic Affairs in January of 2003 and in 2004 officially became vice president.

Before becoming an administrator, Tronto "taught every grade but kindergarten and ninth." She eventually settled down at the community college level and spent 19 years as an instructor, teaching at both Pierce and Mission colleges.

Because of her history as an instructor, Tronto feels she is better able "to understand the issues in the classroom that faculty have, either with the status of the classroom or the lack of materials for their classroom."

Joanne Waddell, a physical education instructor and Valley's chapter president of the American Federation of Teachers union said, "She is fair and honest and direct, which is, in my job as the union rep, that is the best you can expect out of an administrator — that they are honest and fair and direct and that they respect the contract and Charlie does all of those. It is unique in an administrator . . . When she came here as a dean, it's like she never forgot where she came from."

Although she enjoys her job, Tronto looks forward to living a more leisurely life once she retires.

"I will have more time to do some of the other things I like to do," she said.

'Security'

continued from page 1

crimes, [like] the vehicle burglaries, the exterior vandalism," said Lynch. "I know that they're putting in a significant number of cameras so I expect it to be a big deterrent and a big factor in solving a lot of crimes."

Another concern at Valley is lighting, and while the college has been planning to upgrade this, main walkways on campus are already lit. Valley has also shortened the interval between replacing lights on campus.

According to Jacobsmeier, the campus

would normally wait until 20 lights were out until they would replace the bulbs, but now maintenance and operation replaces the light bulbs every time that five lights go out.

The funding comes from Proposition A/AA, which was passed between 2001 and 2003, giving Valley \$286 million for renovating the campus. The security features were tied to other projects, so those projects had to finish before construction could begin on the safety enhancements.

'MTA'

continued from page 1

an effort to wipe out next year's \$104 million budget deficit.

"We are heading toward a cliff," Snoble said in an interview. "And if we don't do something, we will fall off that cliff."

Robert Keith, a student who attends California School of Culinary Arts said, "[The fee is] going to cut into my play money some, but overall, I really won't notice it [because] metro links are still the cheapest way to travel 196 miles a day." Keith, who uses the metro from Oceanside to Pasadena continued, "I get a monthly pass from Oceanside to LA and that's about \$256 but it covers the rails and trains which are still cheaper compared to \$35 a day in gas, plus wear and tear on my car."

Keith already pays about \$3,072 annually but in 2009 will be paying nearly 130 percent more.

In Los Angeles the price for a monthly pass is \$53 but in July will be \$75, and eventually \$120.

According to the DailyNews.com, "Passenger fares this year brought in about \$278.5 million, about 9 percent of the agency's \$3 billion budget. The MTA also got \$1.6 million from its share of Los Angeles County's sales tax."

Former Valley college student Dahlia Harris said, "I buy a daily pass for work and CSUN three times a week which costs me \$9."

Although the daily pass allows unlimited rides that day, in the next two years Harris' fee will jump about 66 percent.



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DISCLAIMER: PLEASE NOTE THAT INTERN POSITIONS MAY BE FILLED AT ANY TIME.

For more information or application assistance please visit:
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www.laccdinterns.org

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The LACCD Interns Program is sponsored by PVJOBS is funded by Proposition A/AA in partnership with LACCD and DMJM/JGM.



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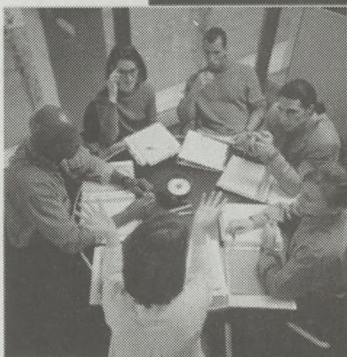
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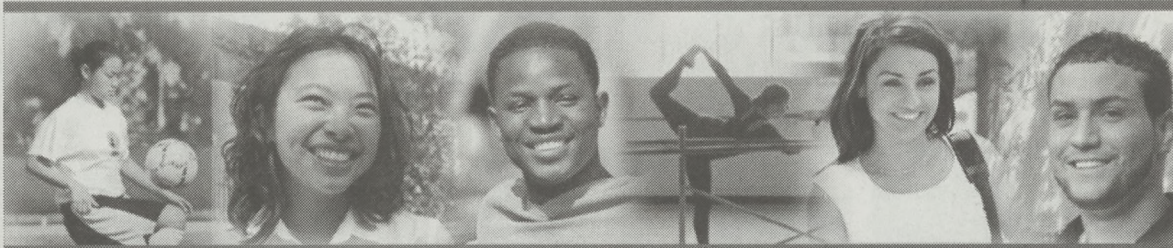
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WEDNESDAY TO
TUESDAY

Wednesday, May 2

Short Story Analysis Workshop @
Writing Center
Humanities 100; 3
- 4 p.m.

Jewish Lunch Discussion @ Foreign
Language 113; 1
p.m.

Friday, May 4, Saturday,
May 5

Urinetown @ Horseshoe
Theater; 8 p.m.;
\$15 general
admission, \$10
students and
seniors

Monday, May 7

The Writing Process Workshop @ Writing Center,
Humanities 100;
12 - 1 p.m.

Wednesday, May 9

Thesis Workshop @
Writing Center,
Humanities 100; 1
- 2 p.m.

Thursday, May 10

"Concert of World Music,"
Observatory
Orchestra and
Woodwind
Quintet @ 11:30
a.m.; Free

Think Transfer!

Wednesday, May 2
CSU Los Angeles Rep
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Thursday, May 3
Undecided Major/Career
Workshop
1 p.m. - 2 p.m.

Friday, May 4
UC Santa Barbara Bus Trip
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Monday, May 7
UCLA Day Information Fair
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.; Monarch
Square

Admission, Financial Aid and
Department Workshops
1 - 2 p.m.; Foreign Language
Bldg.

Tuesday, May 8
CSU Northridge Rep
10 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 5 - 7
p.m.

Undecided Major/Career
Workshop
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 9
How to Transfer Workshop
1 - 2 p.m.

All events held in Career/
Transfer Center (Adm. 126)
unless otherwise indicat-
ed. Call the Career/Transfer
Center for further informa-
tion at (818) 947-2646.

Top 5 Online Stories

1. Vandalism Runs Amok
2. USC's Reaction to Protests too Extreme
3. Ruckus Redirected to Religion
4. Reliving the Horrors of Katrina
5. Mime Magic

Read these and more sto-
ries at lavalleystar.com

FIRST PERSON ACCOUNT, THIRD OF THREE PARTS

New Orleans: The Slow Recovery

By KRISTEN BECKER
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

New Orleans residents have a choice when looking back at Hurricane Katrina and what it did to their city - they can dwell on the destruction and their anger at the response of the government or they can find other ways to rebuild their city and their lives.

Alana Harris chose the second path. "We're not focusing on the problem, we're focusing on the solution," she said. "And the solution is volunteers, nails and hammers, that's the solution."

Harris is a single mother of two who is a life-long New Orleans resident. Before the storm, she lived near the 17th Street Canal. When the storm surge breached its walls, her home was destroyed. She was one of the tens of thousands of New Orleans residents who were displaced by the storm.

Despite her losses, Harris "came back immediately . . . I wanted to be here, my heart was here, I wanted to see for myself," she said. "So, when I came back to see things on my own and I saw little signs of life, I said, 'You know what, I just have to come back and roll up my sleeves and grind it up and this place will be home again.'"

We met her when we worked on the home Habitat for Humanity is building with her. In order to remind her of the dedication and spirit of the volunteers, Harris asked every volunteer to write a message on the house's frame. Although she would not be able to see it, she would know that it was there.

Harris and her coworkers who came to help with the construction, spoke openly and honestly with us and agreed to participate in an impromptu panel discussion about the obstacles many New Orleans residents still face in their attempts to rebuild their damaged homes, primarily from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and their insurance companies.

Tara Lake, an African-American Studies professor at Valley College and one of the trip's organizers wanted us "to have an opportunity to learn about the environment and to learn about the perspectives of the people here who know their stories best," she said before the discussion began. "We know we aren't getting the entire truth out in California."

There seemed to be a unanimous distrust of both FEMA and the federal government.

"I don't believe in the government because if we can spend money on the war, if we can ship . . . food to the hungry people in other countries . . . look how we came through for the tsunami," said Harris. "We can't even do that on American soil?"

Harris and her coworkers made gave us a lot of disturbing information that is not being reported in the mainstream media. For example, the city of New Orleans plans to take possession of and sell any home that has not been repaired by a certain date.

Jonathan Hamilton, a friend and coworker of Alana Harris explained how residents see this policy. "Basically, the city is stealing from the people [who]



PHOTO BY KRISTEN BECKER

LENDING HANDS OF SUPPORT - Valley students Karen Linares and Noel Hollowell join other volunteers from across the country constructing homes in New Orleans with Habitat for Humanity.

don't have the resources to come back and actually live [in their homes]."

I finally understood the anger and distrust aimed at FEMA when Hamilton told us that FEMA is expecting some of the recipients of emergency funds to repay the money because the funds were supposedly distributed by mistake.

"So, you have people that [FEMA has] given this assistance to, who actually needed it and they're retracting it," said Hamilton, who was told to repay the \$2000 the agency gave him after the storm. "How are you gonna retract something from a person

[who] doesn't have anything anyway? They don't have anything to give you."

Despite the difficulty that comes with trying to start over, all of the people we spoke to have no desire to live anywhere but New Orleans.

When asked why she decided to come back, Harris answered simply, "Because this is our home."

Because they are so passionate about seeing their city as it once was, all the New Orleans residents we encountered during our six days in the city were so grateful to know that we had come to help rebuild and that they

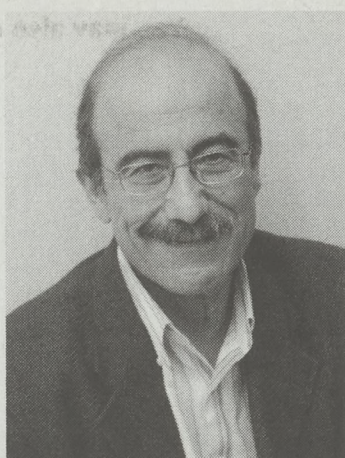
were not forgotten. From Harris and her coworkers to people walking past the Habitat for Humanity site, everyone made sure to thank us just for being in New Orleans.

Because of FEMA's unreliability and the federal government's lack of interest, people like Harris must rely on organizations like Habitat for Humanity and the willingness of strangers to volunteer to get the assistance they need.

"It's amazing to me that we have people who are enough to come and we have politicians that we put in place . . . to do this and no one seems to care."

Aksoy's
Top Five
Economics
Books

By ANDY FEHER
SPECIAL TO THE STAR



PAUL OLDEN / VALLEY STAR
Economics Professor Paul Olden reveals his top five books by famous economists

Valley College's Economics Department may not attract students immediately, but Professor Paul Olden Aksoy always imparts his knowledge in a comprehensive and digestible way.

Economic systems, Aksoy facetiously explains, are like religions. Depending on one's "religion," a person will choose which book serves as their "Bible."

While he has a clear predilection for Adam Smith and David Ricardo and revealed "they are dear to my heart," Aksoy also recommended a few less notable authors of value.

1. **"The Worldly Philosophers"** by Robert Heilbroner. First published more than 50 years ago, it has undergone numerous editions, echoing Heilbroner's views as they evolve. For those students seeking to grasp key concepts of the great economists, Karl Marx, John Maynard Keynes, Thorstein Veblen and more, this book offers a thorough, yet accessible narrative.

2. **"History of Economic Analysis"** by Joseph Schumpeter. As the title suggests, this book necessitates an exhaustive economic acumen. A precocious Austrian, Schumpeter spent a decade writing "History," yet death caught him before he could finish. From Aristotle to Keynes, Schumpeter tackles economics, history, soci-

ology and philosophy.

3. **"Theories of Value and Distribution Since Adam Smith"** by Maurice Dobb. Any book written in 2002 that begins with Adam Smith entails a dense awareness of historical epochs. Dobb's textured and nuanced analysis grasps the economic realities that appear within the discipline.

4. **"Wealth of Nations"** by Adam Smith. Even though "Wealth of Nations" was written more than 230 years ago, it still provides "great insight," according to Aksoy. For a student at any level, reading Smith involves an almost unparalleled commitment, for this magnum opus stretches more than 1200 pages.

5. **"Principles of Political Economy and Taxation"** by David Ricardo. Ricardo and Smith have wholly dichotomous writing styles. Whereas Smith ambitiously sought to address many topics - too many in fact, Aksoy claims, since sections like international trade suffer from slovenliness - Ricardo dealt with few topics in great detail. In his words, Ricardo's work is "perfect." In 1991, Aksoy wrote "The Problem of the Multiple Interpretations of Ricardo."

Leonard "WINGS" it at Valley

By DIANA QUEZADA
STAFF WRITER

For Environmental Science Professor Meredith Leonard, teaching at Valley College is just the right combination of keeping busy and changing lives. Nearing her second full year at Valley, the 39-year-old Irish, English, Italian and Icelandic woman sits at a desk covered with stacks of papers and books that make her already petite frame appear even smaller.

Her glasses frame her green eyes and her light brown hair drapes along her freckled face. A pair of three-drop beige and brown earrings resembling small meteors suits her well. While she has a soft, sweet voice, her impact at Valley is far from quiet.

With a full-time teaching schedule of seven environmental science classes including geography and biology, Leonard will also be teaching a meteorology course for the first time at Valley in the fall.

"I like feeling like I'm providing something that I felt was missing when I was

a student," said Leonard, who participates in a number of activities to motivate students, such as monthly "Friday Nights at the Movies" and bike rides through the Sepulveda basin that she says are meant to "get people out of their cars."

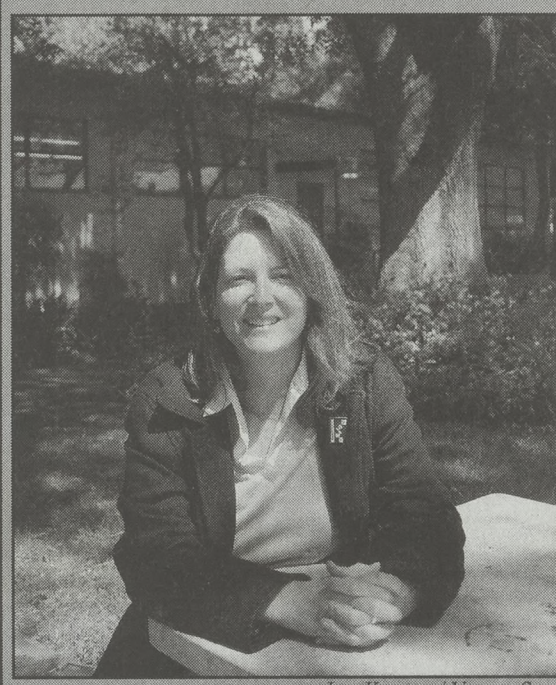
Leonard is heavily involved in Valley's environmental community and gets plenty of student interaction as a part of the Water Improvement by the Next Generation of Scientists program. WINGS is a \$250,000 grant that was awarded to Valley by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The program was created to develop the environmental science department at Valley and is one of many things Leonard says can benefit students.

"I tell [students] about opportunities for them to get extra credit . . . to go out and get real-world experience and bring that back to the classroom," said Leonard. "[I want them to] connect what we're doing in [the] classroom to what [life] is really like."

Her teaching philosophy has paid off and directly affected students lives.

"She inspired me in many ways," said Celika Saito, who took Environmental Science 1 and 22 from Leonard. "I was majoring in economics but she influenced me [in a way] that I changed my major to environmental [engineering]."

The satisfaction that comes with teaching is a welcome one for Leonard, whose path toward becoming a teacher wasn't always clear.



LOFTY AMBITIONS - Environmental Science Professor Meredith Leonard wants to be the type of instructor she never had

A second-generation Angelino, Leonard completed her bachelor's degree in geography with an environmental emphasis in 1991 from UCLA, home to the same well-known medical center where she was born.

Although she had her degree, Leonard said she didn't immediately know what to do with it and worked a number of different jobs, including one at an oncology office doing reception work and insurance billing.

"I wandered for a while and was a ski bum for a while," said Leonard. "[I] decided I had a little bit more ambition than that, but didn't know exactly what I wanted to do."

She continued school at CSUN working toward her master's and interned at the Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board where she made maps with geographic information systems. It was during her time there that she realized that she wanted a career with more opportunities.

"I didn't want to sit in a gray cubicle in a gray office," said Leonard, wearing an appropriate earth tone outfit. "I would literally sit there with my Walkman . . . and just do my thing. I just needed more human interaction than I was getting."

While finishing her degree, she obtained an emergency teaching position at Antelope Valley College and began to teach geography all over southern California.

Her passion for teaching also helped inspire a group of Valley students to start the first community college chapter of the National Hispanic Environmental Council. She is proud yet modest as she says, "Not that I feel like I made it happen, but through my list of [WINGS] events . . . something stuck with a few of my students . . . and I think it helped get the NHEC chapter started."



PAUL OLDEN / VALLEY STAR

OH SO CLOSE - Valley College swimmer Jacob Cook dives into the water at Santa Monica College last weekend during the finals for the Men's 100-yard Butterfly at the WSC Championships. Cook finished second with a time of 53.77 seconds, missing a trip to the State Championships by two-tenths of a second.



PAUL OLDEN / VALLEY STAR

TRIPLE THREAT - Valley College swimmer Marc Hicks has qualified for the state swimming championships in Fremont, CA this weekend in three events. Here, Hicks takes second place in the Men's 400-yard IM (4:22.08) at the WSC Championships in Santa Monica last weekend.



PAUL OLDEN / VALLEY STAR

HOME AWAY FROM HOME - Due to a lack of facilities on the Valley College campus, the Monarchs' swim team has to practice at the Van Nuys-Sherman Oaks Recreation Center. The new Valley College pool should be ready for team practices next spring.

SWIMMING AGAINST THE ODDS

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY PAUL OLDEN

Considering the hardships the Valley College swim team has to deal with--always on the road for meets and practices--it's been a good season.

Three competitors: swimmers Marc Hicks, Eric Kramer and diver Tiffanie Wright have qualified for the State meet this weekend in Fremont, California.

But next season will be different for the Valley swim team. The new 50 meter state-of-the-art pool is scheduled to be ready by late spring 2008, so practices can finally be held on campus.

Coach Jim McMillan says the pool will be the best facility in the San Fernando Valley. And it will be a big plus in at least one key area.

"It definitely will help in attracting young student-athletes," said McMillan.

But until the new pool is ready, the Monarchs' team motto could be: "Have swim trucks ... will travel."



PAUL OLDEN / VALLEY STAR

A GOOD REFLECTION - Valley College swimmer Patti Navarro finished third in the women's 200-yard IM (2:31.14) at the WSC championships at Santa Monica College last weekend. Navarro is among several swimmers on this year's team who have swam to personal best times.



PAUL OLDEN / VALLEY STAR

DON'T GO NEAR THE WATER - What's left of the water in the Valley College swimming pool is best avoided by everyone. Construction workers will need another year to tear down the old pool and build the new swimming facility which should be ready by spring 2008.